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AMERICAN FURNITURE.

A RECENT visit to the warerooms of Frank Rhoner & Co., manufacturers of furniture, 437 East Twenty-second street, New York, disclosed some very useful novelties in parlor, library and hall furniture. There is a decided taste at present for overstuffed suites in both dark and light upholstery, and a great many examples of such work are exhibited.

The manager reports that the prevailing fashion in upholstery goods is for light effects, corresponding to the colorings in carpets. The public are getting away from the idea that the parlor should be necessarily furnished in a somber style. The darkest colors at present used are copper or old rose shades in silk brocades, which are in demand throughout the coal regions of Pennsylvania, where the color of the fabric will not so easily soil, owing to the amount of soot in the atmosphere. In New England and the East brighter tints are desired, such as delicate blue, coral, red and Nile green brocades.

In Fig. 1 we show a parlor suite upholstered in brocaded silk, finished off with a roll of plush and trimmed with a deep fringe, all harmonizing in tint with the brocade. Many of these overstuffed suites consist of four pieces only, all being of the same color, and it is usual to add to the furniture of the room one or two pieces in gilt wood, which secures an agreeable contrast. Many of the overstuffed suites exhibit in places the framework, which is in nearly all cases gilt, and this combination of gilt wood with overstuffed upholstery forms one of the most artistic methods of treating modern furniture. In conversation divans, both overstuffed and gilt wood effects, there are many beautiful examples. There is a large line of occasional tables, all entirely gilt, and made doubly attractive by fine carved work. Some of the conceptions are truly beautiful, many of the tables having four decks, each shelf having a different shape. All pieces of this description are extremely popular, and sell on sight. There is also a line of cabinet tables in mahogany and oak in the same styles as the gilt tables, many having a multiplicity of shelves, which are heart-shaped, kidney-shaped or easel-shaped.

It requires great experience and correct artistic judgment to determine how much ornament should be expended on such furnishings without running up the cost to too high a figure. A table that sells for, say $7.50, would be very easily made with a little more artistic display, to be worth $10.00, but at such a price the table would be practically unsalable. The rule seems to be, in the manufacture of furniture, that a particular article must not be made to cost more than what the prevailing average price of such an article is throughout the trade in general, because articles that have artistic merits that render them worth more than the average cost of the line of goods they belong to, are very apt to be rejected by customers solely on account of their cost. The designers of furniture are thus rarely allowed to give free exercise to their individual fancies, for the question of price dominates everything.

Again, a particular piece of furniture must not be too odd in shape or style. People are fond of original effects within a certain sharply defined limit, beyond which it is dangerous to stray. It must be useful above all things and have a strong resemblance to similar pieces of furniture, made everywhere, and within these limits imagination may sport itself without producing something that is too bizarre for the taste of the ordinary individual.

Fig. 1.

One of the greatest novelties manufactured by the firm is a very attractive parlor table which, by a slight revolution of the top, is converted into a card table, with receptacles for counters, ash receivers, etc. Fig. 2 shows this table with the top closed, while Fig. 3 shows the top open for cards or games. The size is 35x35, and it is made of oak of antique, XVI. century, or old English finish, and in light or dark mahogany finish. Figs. 4 and 5 represent a similar table constructed for six or less players. This is a most unique contrivance, and the price is moderate, and for its combined purpose it is undoubtedly the best article yet placed on the market. It is opened by simply revolving the top until the leaf drops into place between the boxes. To close the table, raise the top, grasping the same at directly opposite points, and when clear of the top of the boxes, it is simply revolved into place.

Fig. 2.

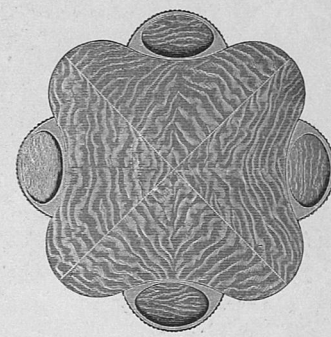

Fig. 3.

In library furniture some elegant suites are shown in leather of various colors. Each suite consists of a sofa, two arm-chairs and two side chairs, overstuffed with leather of a dark green, tan, maroon, wine-red or yellow color. For style, quality and

price these library suites are well calculated to meet the demands of the trade, and it was no surprise for us to hear that the firm are all the time two or three weeks behind with their orders for such goods.

There is a line of easy, comfortable, roomy, well made floor rockers, that are generous in their dimensions and solid in construction, the material being quartered oak.

It is in hall stands in particular that the most unique effects are observable. The majority of these stands have floor plates 66 and 38 inches, and are made of oak. The top portion is covered with elaborately carved scrolls, while at either side, on the floor, the stand has original developments, taking the

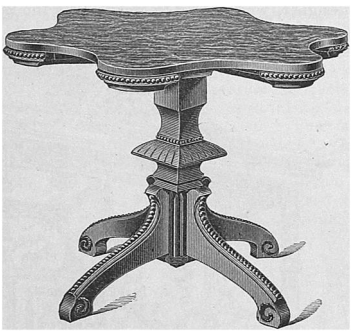

Fig. 4.

forms of Roman chairs, jardiniéres for umbrellas, sticks, etc. In some patterns there is a Roman chair on either side of the plate, while in others there is a Roman chair on one side with a jardiniére on the other. The firm make no cabinets or case work of any kind. Their business is open work of all kinds, their cabinets being irregularly graceful and sweeping in their lines, and as receptacles for bric-a-brac or artistic treasures are the latest perfection of the art of the designer and the skill of the manufacturer.

CHANDELIERS AND CANDLESTICKS.

By Alice H. Witherbee.

EXTENSIVE chandeliers in the middle of a room look old fashioned now beside the many novel appliances for illumination. Housewives who value the beautiful effects to be obtained from subdued lights are giving more and more attention to the lighting facilities of their homes. Whether gas, oil or electricity is the means used, it matters little so long as one has the artistic spirit which arranges fixture and shade so as to avoid vivid glares, and provides instead a soft radiance which will help beautify the most commonplace furnishings. The manner of lighting a room should harmonize with the room itself. It is absurd to leave an ordinary gas fixture in a room meant to be Moorish, Japanese or Persian in detail.

It was a novel idea, but one exceptionally beautiful, that of lighting a white room with nothing but fairy lamps. The covering of the walls and ceiling was a white chintz or challie, figured with blue flower sprigs. The bed was canopied with white, while goat skin rugs covered the hard floor; dressing table and wash basin were draped with white, while here and there, partially concealed, perhaps, behind white draperies, shone the pale gleams of several fairy lamps, shaded by dull blue porcelain globes. It was like a moonlight scene in fairy-land. One would not have been surprised to have caught a glimpse of a winged cherub as the rightful occupant of the room, which was, however, the chamber of a fair young maid. Artists who use their studios for midnight receptions, dances and even weddings, employ many fanciful light holders. Carved sconces, with branches in the Adam style, are used to display the rich tones of the wood paneling. Scallop shells hold the subdued rays which soften the ideal head on the canvas, while all sorts of antique and oriental swinging lamps light up dark recesses. Drawing-rooms will bear greater brilliancy than some other rooms, but even then the light should not be a glaring one. For this purpose, superb chandeliers of bent iron work in the Italian renaissance, with circles of many tinted lights, answer admirably well. To insure softness lace shades should be used.

The study or living room of the family can be no better lighted than by several softly shaded lamps, resting here and there on tables convenient for reading or sewing, while it always seems a pity to bring any kind of light into an old fashioned Dutch sitting-room already bright with the flames of the log in the fire-place.

Chandeliers, candlesticks, and electric light brackets are wrought into beautiful designs by skilled workmanship. Bent and twisted iron and chiseled brass are perhaps the most artistic materials at present employed, these being variously finished in gilt, copper, nickel or lacquer. The most beautiful of any of these productions exported to this country are said to be those cast in the world famed iron works of Count Stolberg in the Harz mountains. Quaint indeed are those sixteenth century designs representing antlers and carved figures similar to those used by the nobility for lighting their halls and dining rooms. Carved figures, copied from the portrait of the hero or heroine of some German allegory with every detail of dress complete, are suspended from the ceiling by wrought iron or brass chains.

For the dinner table iron and silver candlesticks are shown, in which electricity is made to take the place of candles. Each are softened with milk white shades. White wood candlesticks with carved vine and leaf tracery enameled in wood bronze and greens are also used for the same purpose. Cupids holding the flaming torch, or with arrows held fast in one chubby hand, while the other holds the bow, are favorite designs for my lady's writing desk or boudoir. Hammered iron lanterns, fitted with venetian glass in the same or different shades, suitable for oil or gas, are suspended from archways and ceiling. Even the old Roman incense burners are copied and Chinese vagaries in the shape of dragons and dolphins. The primitive lantern of one's Puritan ancestors, pierced with bungling holes, which has lain for years with other cast off rubbish in the attic, is exultantly brought forth and brightly burnished to do duty in hall or alcove. Even the colored lanterns used in vessel and train, if they possess a bit of thrilling history, or show the marks of shipwreck, are gladly purchased from those basement vender, whose stores are curiosity shops indeed, but often just the place for obtaining the most picturesque means of illuminating one's home.

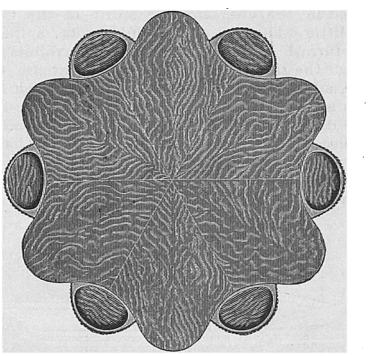

Fig. 5.

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